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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia
 SUBJECT Autumn Maneuvers

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1. The Czechoslovak autumn maneuvers were held in the area between Karlovy Vary and Pilsen, beginning early in Sep 1953.
2. The participating units made offensive movements from the center of the country toward the German-Czech border in a southwesterly direction. One armored division and four rifle divisions were engaged.
3. In correspondence during the maneuvers, these formations were not identified. Only "battle groups" were referred to; the right wing being called "Battle Group West," the left wing "Battle Group East" and the center "Middle Wing."
4. Troops to the total number of 32,000 or 34,000 men took part. They were equipped with new Soviet materiel and used light march packs without gas masks. The umpires included Soviet officers.
5. A good third of the formations consisted of reservists, all Czechs, though among the active classes there were a good many Slovaks. Most of the troops were motorized, although one infantry regiment went afoot.
6. Three examining commissions evaluated the maneuvers, each made up of 7 or 8 Soviet and 12 or 15 Czech officers.
7. Battle Group East was made up of: an armored regiment from Kladno; an armored scouting section; two motorized artillery regiments from Prague; two motorized rifle regiments from Prague; a communications battalion from Prague; an engineer regiment from Prague; a motorized field hospital from Prague; and two heavy motorized train columns, made up of units from several garrisons.

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8. Reservists were called up for 1 Sep 53 and those for Battle Group East were sent to Rakovnik, from whence they were forwarded to the various formations. After a period of five days during which they were equipped, they engaged in small unit exercises before being assigned to regiments. The men were under canvas, but there were barracks for the staffs. The tents were generally overcrowded.
9. Actual maneuvers began with an alarm on 7 Sep 53, and the front line immediately began moving to the southwest. During the movement small vanguard and rearguard exercises were held. On the first evening it was announced that the enemy was yielding to the southwest, but had been unable to break contact with Battle Group East. The daily movement was 11 to 12 km, down to 10 Sep 53, at which time the line of the Irkutsk River was reached. At this point it was announced that the enemy had been reinforced and had succeeded in holding Battle Group East. Enemy formations were represented by markings.
10. The Battle Group was ordered to build a line of defense along the river, with its own artillery in support. The engineers bridged the stream, after which a bridgehead was seized, and reinforcements having arrived, a combat was opened on a wide front. In the defense position, defense in depth was adopted, the first line being several hundred meters in depth.
11. Planes were employed by both sides, single-engined planes representing the attacks, and two-engined planes representing the enemy. There was no dive bombing, and no dummy bombs were dropped.
12. The greatest attention was given to camouflage and the concealment of movements.

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